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WASHINGTON, D. C.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1855.

Mr. SEWARD's speech at Buffalo will be found on the fourth page of to-day's *Era*. No reader of taste or discrimination will fail to give it a careful perusal. It is a fitting response to the great speech at Albany, which we published last week.

The Hon. CHARLES SUMNER has addressed the people of Massachusetts in various places, within a few days, and has everywhere met with immense crowds of glowing listeners. The newspapers speak in enthusiastic terms of his eloquent and effective addresses. We have received the speech delivered in Faneuil Hall, on the 24th inst., from a hasty glance, feel assured that its merits have not been exaggerated.

GOV. SEWARD'S SPEECH IN GERMAN.

We are pleased to learn, by a notice in another column, that the Republican Association of this city have had the admirable speech recently delivered at Albany, by Mr. Seward, translated into the German language, and published in pamphlet form. We hope the friends of Freedom will give it a wide circulation.

BLACK MAIL.

The Washington *Organ* and other presses having charged that the Administration had extorted contributions from the clerks and other subordinate officials in this city, the *Union* responds as follows:

"The Know Nothing papers are excessively indignant because a collection was raised in one of the Departments of this city, for the purpose of assisting the Democratic cause in the city of Baltimore at the approaching election, and have charged against one of the chiefs of the Department, about the size of the portions in recommending these contributions. We confess that we see no grievous harm in all this matter."

We suppose that there can be no great wrong in the voluntary contributions by officeholders, more than by private citizens, to the advancement of their parties or principles; but, as is alleged, the money has been demanded by the heads of bureaus, or other superior officers, the case is one of foul corruption. No greater outrage upon the conscience and honor of a man can be made, than to compel him, on pain of dismissal from office, to contribute to the advancement of a cause which he judges to be just, and which he is bound to support. It is not a business in which an honorable man would participate as a tax-gatherer, though we fear that many honest men, with families to support, have been the victims of it. Let the *Union* speak out more distinctly. Let it answer if the Federal Administration has stooped to the infamous, petty tyranny, of exacting contributions from officeholders.

PASSMORE WILLIAMSON RELEASED.

Our readers will rejoice at the release of Passmore Williamson from unlawful imprisonment, and still more that he made no dishonorable or unworthy concession to procure his discharge. Judge Kane has been brought to a sense of the foul tyranny which he was exercising over an innocent man, and has shown every disposition to release himself of the fearful responsibility. There is some merit in reputation, at least.

THE CASE OF PASSMORE WILLIAMSON—ITS RELEASE FROM PRISON.

On Saturday morning, Passmore Williamson appeared in the United States District Court in Philadelphia, accompanied by Messrs. Meredith, Gilpin, and Hopper, his counsel, and offered a petition, in which he expressed his willingness to purge himself of the contempt in the Wheeler slave case, for which he was imprisoned in July last. Judge Kane received the petition, granted the prayer, and required Williamson to affirm to what he had to say in reply to the interrogatories of the Court. Certain interrogatories were answered by Mr. Vandeyke, the District Attorney, to which he replied:

"I did not seek to obey the writ by producing the person therein named before the Court, because I had not, at the time of the service of the writ, the power over the custody or control of him, and therefore it was impossible for me to do so. I first heard of the writ of *habeas corpus* on Friday, July 20th, between one and two o'clock A. M., on my return from Harrisburg. After breakfast, I called on Mr. Vandeyke, and went from my house to Mr. Hopper's office, when and where the return was prepared."

"At ten o'clock, I came into court, as commanded by the writ, sought to obey the writ by answering it truly. The parties not being in my possession or control, it was impossible for me to obey the writ by producing them, since the service of the writ was not the custody, possession, or power over them; nor have I known where they were, except from the common rumor or the newspaper reports, regarding their public appearance in the city or elsewhere."

"Some discussion arose between the District Attorney and the counsel of Mr. Williamson. Mr. Vandeyke contended that the reply of the defendant was evasive and contradictory. The Judge said the difficulty, he thought, could be easily overcome, by amending the answer, as suggested by the Court, it was amended in the following manner:

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THE PRESIDENCY.

In less than twelve months from to-day, the people of the United States will be called on to select a President for the succeeding four years, under circumstances of extraordinary importance. All previous contests of the kind are thrown into the shade, in comparison with that which is now approaching, in the influence which it is destined to wield upon the national character and welfare. The growth of the Pro-Slavery sentiment has been gradual, from an early period of our history to the present time; and the encroachments of the slave oligarchy upon the rights of the people, commencing by stealth and almost imperceptible approaches, has risen at length to the fearful height of threatening the overthrow of the last remnant of constitutional and civil Freedom.

The question of Slavery has, for a dozen years, exercised a potent influence on the politics of the country, and in the last Presidential struggle it was almost the only subject of controversy. But never until now was it the sole issue, fairly made up, with the friends of Freedom arrayed on one side, and those of Slavery on the other. In 1844, the annexation of Texas was the turning point; but thousands of Southern men, slaveholders, opposed the acquisition on conservative grounds, or in a spirit of accommodation to their Northern allies; while large bodies of Northern men, for like party considerations, or other motives than the question of Slavery, favored annexation. In 1848, each of the great parties avoided as far as practicable a direct issue on the subject of Slavery—the Whigs as a party saying nothing, and leaving its members in the different sections of the Union to say what they pleased; while the Democratic party made a great noise over its hobby of non-intervention. As parties, neither made a direct issue with the Dallas Case and Taylor, particularly of the latter, claimed to be equally hostile with the Free-Soilers to Slavery extension.

In 1852, the contest was still on side issues—the question was not, openly, Freedom or Slavery, but Slavery or Conservatism. The North was not at that time sufficiently aroused to the importance of vindicating the principles of Freedom. The slave oligarchy had committed the voluntary contributions by officeholders, more than by private citizens, to the advancement of their parties or principles; but, as is alleged, the money has been demanded by the heads of bureaus, or other superior officers, the case is one of foul corruption. No greater outrage upon the conscience and honor of a man can be made, than to compel him, on pain of dismissal from office, to contribute to the advancement of a cause which he judges to be just, and which he is bound to support. It is not a business in which an honorable man would participate as a tax-gatherer, though we fear that many honest men, with families to support, have been the victims of it. Let the *Union* speak out more distinctly. Let it answer if the Federal Administration has stooped to the infamous, petty tyranny, of exacting contributions from officeholders.

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The Republicans will come forward with a platform declaring Freedom to be national, and Slavery sectional—they will declare in favor of confining Slavery to the slave States, and will oppose the admission of any more slave States into the Union. The sham Democracy will take the opposite ground, in favor of the right of slaveholding in all the Territories, and the right of transit for slaves through the free States. They will endorse the Fugitive Slave Law, with all its fiendish details, and sanction the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and the outrages of the Squatter Sovereigns in Kansas. These concessions will be rigidly and imperatively demanded by the South in the Cincinnati Convention; they will be yielded by the Northern doughface delegates, the South or anti-Free-Soilers being first kicked out, if any should make their appearance; and the platform, thus constituted of Virginia and Georgia plank, will secure at least three-fourths of the Southern electoral votes. The Know Nothings will probably carry Kentucky and Delaware, and possibly Tennessee and Louisiana. These are the limits of their possibilities in the South, the twelfth section of their Philadelphia platform to the contrary notwithstanding.

The Locos everywhere, south of Mason and Dixon's line, have the inside track of the dark lantern boys, for the reason that they are regarded as more actively subservient to the Slave Power. The Locos are the aggressive Pro-Slavery party, the champions of Slavery extension; while the Know Nothings are the timid conservatives, who only profess attachment to Southern institutions, and acquiesce in the aggressions of their slaveholding friends.

But the ultra Pro-Slavery character of the Lococo platform, while it will make them invincible in the South, will render it impossible to carry a single free State on a direct issue of a Pro-Slavery or Anti-Slavery President. In the late State elections, no direct issue on Slavery was presented. Side issues intervened to turn the scale. In Maine, the Temperance cause divided the election; in New York, the question of the National Bank prevented the Republicans from carrying the State by an absolute majority, though their vote, together with that of the Whigs, who professed equal abhorrence of Slavery, shows an overwhelming ascendancy of the Anti-Slavery feeling, which cannot fail to be united on the Republican candidate for President. Even the Pierce Democratic candidates professed to be opposed to Slavery in the Territories, and some of them declared themselves against the Nebraska Bill. In the Presidential contest, no such shifts and subterfuges, and no such side issues, can be interposed, to prevent a fair expression of public opinion.

In Pennsylvania, similar causes prevented a union of the Anti-Nebraska voters, who brought four candidates for Canal Commissioner into the field, against the single candidate of the Administration. The latter was elected by a plurality vote, though falling nearly three thousand short of a majority, while the total vote cast was sixty odd thousand less than was polled for Pierce, Scott, and Hale, in 1852. The organization of the Know Nothing party was not complete. Know Nothingism was sadly in the way, and instead of fusion on Republican principles, "forsaking all others," there was only a coalition of Whigs, Know Nothings, and Democrats. Their defeat was just the thing necessary to teach them wisdom, and we rejoice at it. They have abundant elements of success in the approaching Presidential election, by an overwhelming majority, and we will not doubt that they will achieve it gloriously, under the Republican banner. Indiana furnishes another example of the ill success of partial fusion on a platform of principle. In that State, the party of Know Nothingism, the Party of Secrecy, still had hopes and ulterior aims of its own, and refused to lay aside its narrow, proscriptive policy. The result is, a war of heavy counteraction on the part of Independent Democrats and other Anti-Nebraska men, while the former, who would have swelled the ranks of a genuine Republican party, were utterly repelled by the latter, who were not to be won over by the promises of the Know Nothings.

The same necessity for reorganization—for purging out Know Nothingism—exists in Iowa. The Slavery party has been defeated in that State, but it has not been done fairly and squarely upon Republican principles. Know Nothingism claims a share in the victory, and thus makes the election a victory for the slave. Freedom would otherwise feel at the result. The same remark is applicable to Illinois. It is not too late to correct these errors

WASHINGTON D. C.

THE CONTEST AND THE CRISIS.

SPEECH OF HON. WILLIAM H. SEWARD

At the Great Republican Meeting in Buffalo, October 1, 1855.

I am always proud of my native State, when I stand in the presence of the mountains under whose shadow I was born, or on the shores of the silver lake among which I dwell. I am prouder still, when looking out from the windows of the Capitol, I see the Mediterranean waters of the continent, obedient to her command, mingle their floods with the tides of the world-encircling ocean. No harbor is so proud as New York at once unloading the gates of the West, and standing sentinel on the frontier of the Republic, whose safety constitutes the hope of the human race. Speaking on such a stage, how can I do otherwise than speak thoughtfully, sincerely, earnestly.

Ye good men of Erie! The Republican Party is sounding throughout all our borders a deep-toned alarm for the safety of the Constitution, of Union, and Liberty. Do you hear it? The Republican Party declares that, by means of recent treacherous measures adopted by Congress and the Executive, the rights of the States, the constitutional safeguards of citizens, identical with the rights of human nature itself, are undermined, impaired, and in danger of being overthrown. Do you hear it? The Republican Party declares that, by means of recent treacherous measures adopted by Congress and the Executive, the rights of the States, the constitutional safeguards of citizens, identical with the rights of human nature itself, are undermined, impaired, and in danger of being overthrown.

The Republican Party is not deficient, either in intelligence, in earnest patriotism, in moderation, or in numbers. Its members everywhere are among those who, in all our political, moral, and religious associations, have been as enlightened and as efficient as any others. They constitute its masses have, some for long periods, and others through long lives, been steadfast supporters of the Republican Party, but also of all those principles of Justice, Equality, and Liberty, which are the basis of Republican Government. Not one of them, so far as we know, has been a traitor to his country, or a betrayer of his principles.

It is, indeed, popularly regarded as a Party of yesterday. But, practically, it is old and well known in the field of public affairs. Its policy is to inculcate perpetual jealousy of the increase and extension of slavery, and to maintain, organization, and administration, of free States in the common Territories of the United States. This policy is even older than the Constitution itself. It is the policy of Madison, Jefferson, and Washington. It was early exercised in prohibiting the African slave trade, and devoting the Northwest Territory to perpetual freedom. It was the policy of the State of New York, and of the State of Massachusetts, which prevailed in the Federal Government, has, without change or even the shadow of turning, been always the policy of the State of New York, and of the State of Massachusetts.

Slavery, contrary to the expectations of the founders of the Republic, still exists in this, the seventy-ninth year of Independence; and it is the only relic of the past which remains, apparently a reasonable hope of at least a long continuance. On the other hand, the love of equality springs from the hearts of all the American people, and is irrepressible and imperishable—and so there remains an unyielding jealousy of the increase and extension of slavery. The Republican Party fosters that jealousy, and directs it to the proper means of its resistance. Thus it happens, that as the Republican Party grows, the masses of the people grow more and more a party of to-day, but a durable, perpetual organization.

The slaveholders, always sufficiently united and consolidated, have, however, become divided, and their aggressions have become at last intolerable. They have rushed into a dead lock with the masses of the people, whose whole breadth is the field of contest. A changeless array of the Republic, throughout its future existence, is the object of this majestic strife. The slaveholders, on the one side, and the masses of the people, on the other, are now, and for an indefinite period must continue to be, not merely the chief combatants, but practical enemies. I know of no other party, and there are others, but they are all parties, and are the circumstances under which it appeals to you to enter into the ranks of the masses of the people, and to stand by them. Shall I have on your part a fair and candid hearing in this behalf?

I am well aware that at this moment large popular masses are at rest, while others, broken up in the general wreck of former parties, are moving capriciously, and in divergent directions. I know of no other party, and there are others, but they are all parties, and are the circumstances under which it appeals to you to enter into the ranks of the masses of the people, and to stand by them. Shall I have on your part a fair and candid hearing in this behalf?

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